

**Cascade County
Special Commission Meeting
September 5, 2017 @ 9:30 a.m.
Courthouse Annex
Commission Chambers, Room 105**

Notice: Pursuant to MCA 2-3-212(1), the official record of the minutes of the meeting is in audio form, located at cascadecountymt.gov and the Clerk and Records Office. This is a written record of this meeting to reflect all the proceedings of the Board. MCA 7-4-2611 (2) (b). This written record was officially approved on September 12, 2017.

PRESENT:

Commissioners: Chairman Jim Larson, Commissioner Jane Weber, and Commissioner Joe Briggs

Staff: Carey Ann Haight, Rina Fontana Moore, Mary Embleton, Diane Brien, Bonnie Fogerty, and Marie Johnson.

Public: Jenn Powell

RECONVENE BUDGET HEARING: Chairman Larson reconvened that budget hearing.

PUBLIC NOTICE: The public notice is provided as exhibit "A".

CLOSE OF THE BUDGET HEARING: Chairman Larson closed the budget hearing.

OPENING OF THE SPECIAL MEETING: Chairman Larson opened the special meeting.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Larson called the special meeting to order at 9:31.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Everyone participated in reciting the pledge of allegiance.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Agenda Item #1

Motion to Approve or Disapprove Resolution 17-80: Adopting a Budget for Fiscal Year 2017/2018. R0344538

Mary Embleton gave a power point presentation on the Cascade County Fiscal Year 2017/2018 Annual Operating Budget and Capital Improvements Plan (see exhibit "B"). See audio recording for full presentation.

Commissioner Weber made a **MOTION** to approve Resolution 17-80 adopting a budget for the Fiscal Year 2017/2018 in the amount of \$70,598,229.00. **Motion carries 3-0**

Agenda Item #2.

Motion to Approve or Disapprove Resolution 17-82: Assessments for Rural Lighting Districts for Fiscal Year 2017/2018. R0344539

Rina Fontana Moore presented these five lightning districts.

Commissioner Briggs made a **MOTION** to approve Resolution 17-82 assessments for rural lighting districts for fiscal year 2017/2018 which include View Crest Addition in the amount of \$536.38, Skyline Addition-Stan Oil Tracts in the amount of \$431.05, Little Chicago Addition, Black Eagle in the amount of \$5,258.87, Black Eagle in the amount of \$610.25, and Black Eagle Community Center in the amount of \$18,487.81. Commissioner Briggs clarified that this is the total amount for each district not the amount that will be charged to each individual in that district.

Motion carries 3-0

Agenda Item #3

Motion to Approve or Disapprove Resolution 17-83: Setting of Cascade County Tax Mill - Fiscal Year 2017/2018. R0345445

Commissioner Weber read schedule "A" from Resolution 17-83 identifying the mills.

Commissioner Weber made a **MOTION** to approve the setting of the Cascade County Tax Mills for fiscal year 2107/2018.

Motion carries 3-0.

Agenda Item #4

Motion to Approve or Disapprove Resolution 17-84: Setting Tax Mill Levies for Independent Taxing Jurisdictions for Fiscal Year 2017/2018. R0344541

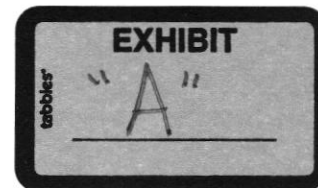
Commissioner Briggs presented the independent taxing jurisdictions mills identified in Resolution 17-84.

Commissioner Briggs made a **MOTION** to approve Resolution 17-84 setting mill levies for independent taxing jurisdictions for fiscal year 2017/2018. **Motion carries 3-0**

Agenda Item #5

Public comment on any public matter that is not on the meeting agenda and that is within the Commissioners' jurisdiction. (MCA 2-3-103) No public comment was given.

ADJOURNMENT: Chairman Larson adjourned the special meeting at 10:00 a.m.



NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS
Fiscal Year 2018 Proposed Budget Hearings

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Board of County Commissioners of Cascade County, Montana, has completed the proposed Budget for Cascade County, Montana for the Fiscal Year 2017-2018 and said budget has been placed on file in the Commission County office and is open for inspection, effective Tuesday, August 29, 2017.

The public hearings will open on Tuesday, August 29, 2017 at 8:00 a.m. and continue from day to day until Tuesday, September 5, 2017 at 9:30 a.m. prior to the time of fixing tax levies and setting a final budget for fiscal year 2017-2018. The public hearings are for all funds, including, but not limited to:

County-Wide Mill Levied Funds	County Road & Reserves Mill Levied Funds
County Rural Mill Levied Funds	Permissive Medical Levied Funds
Sheriff Retirement System Mills	Lighting Maintenance Districts

The Board of County Commissioners will meet on Tuesday, September 5, 2017 at 9:30 a.m. in the Commission Chambers, Room 111, Courthouse Annex, 325 Second Avenue North, Great Falls, Montana at which time any taxpayer may appear and be heard for or against any part of said budget.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
CASCADE COUNTY, MONTANA

James L. Larson, Chairman

Jane Weber, Commissioner

Joe Briggs, Commissioner

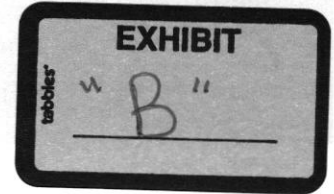
Publication Dates: Sunday, August 20, 2017
Sunday, August 27, 2017

Display Ad



Cascade County Fiscal Year 2017-2018

Annual Operating Budget and Capital Improvements Plan



The Fiscal Year (FY) 2017/18 Cascade County budget contains approximately \$70.5 million of expenditures across all funds. This reflects a 2.6% decrease over the FY 2016/17 amended budget. The decrease constitutes reductions of nearly \$1.45 million in capital outlay.

Capital funding includes \$1.575 million of funding this year for completing the Courthouse Roof Replacement, \$1.2 million for completing of the Fox Farm RSID, and approximately \$941,500 for additional road improvements in the Fox Farm area. A detailed listing of all appropriated Capital Outlay items are on pages 10 and 11.

Internal services decreased by over 18% mainly due to the implementation of more efficient processes which eliminated duplicate budgeting of costs. Additionally, a reclassification of items formerly recorded as costs will now be properly budgeted in accordance with GASB and GAAP Standards.

FY 2018 Preliminary Budget (Matched to System)

	FY 2016 Amended	FY 2017 Amended	FY 2018 Preliminary	% change
General Government	\$14,609,680	\$16,420,175	\$15,996,472	-2.6%
Public Works	\$8,230,704	\$8,306,467	\$8,112,086	-2.3%
Public Safety	\$14,076,029	\$13,917,001	\$15,534,066	11.6%
District Court/JDC	\$2,857,870	\$2,941,624	\$2,952,682	0.4%
Health Department	\$4,767,354	\$3,595,025	\$3,053,116	-15.1%
Aging Services	\$2,284,284	\$2,160,596	\$2,186,818	1.2%
Expo Park	\$5,126,980	\$4,414,470	\$4,582,725	3.8%
Health Clinic	\$3,371,981	\$4,314,502	\$4,020,544	-6.8%
Capital Outlay	\$3,613,545	\$8,294,800	\$6,840,698	-17.5%
Extension Service	\$207,336	\$211,910	\$207,755	-2.0%
Library, Museum, Mental Health,	\$639,508	\$612,893	\$668,409	9.1%
Water & Solid Waste	\$1,078,317	\$1,193,943	\$1,188,029	-0.5%
Special Districts & Programs	\$719,649.00	\$927,987.00	\$1,069,790.00	15.3%
Internal Service	\$5,245,490	\$5,146,062	\$4,185,039	-18.7%
Total Expenditures	\$66,828,727	\$72,457,455	\$70,598,229	-2.6%

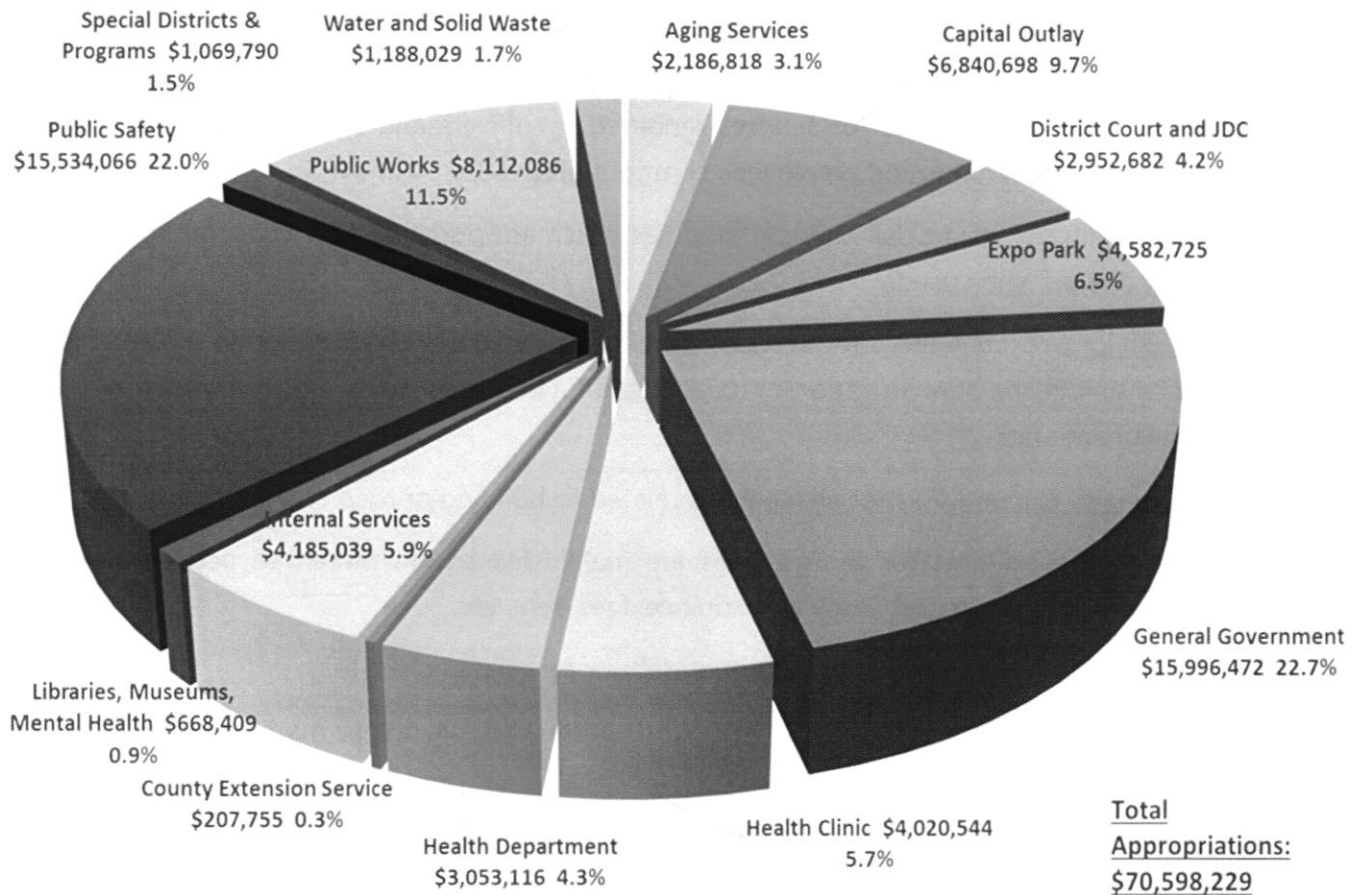
Cascade County Expenditures by Service

Cascade County provides a variety of services to its residents such as Public Health, Public Safety, Aging Services, Health Clinic, and Roads. County operations are broken down as follows:

- General Government– Includes County Commission, Clerk/Recorder, Elections, Treasurer-Vehicle Registration, Superintendent of Schools, the County Attorney, Justice Court, the Public Administrator and Veteran/Indigent Burial. This category also contains central services critical to County operations such as Human Resources, Finance & Accounting, Information Technology and Risk Management.
- Public Safety– Includes the Sheriff's Department, Adult Detention Center, and Disaster and Emergency Services.
- District Courts and JDC– Includes the District Court and Juvenile Detention Center.
- Public Works– All road and bridge maintenance, construction, and engineering. The Planning Department and GIS are also under the department. Includes facilities maintenance for County buildings. Also includes maintenance for military corridors throughout the County. The department also administers the County's capital improvement and equipment program.
- City/County Health Department–Administers all health programs in the county including grant programs and the Women and Infant Child (WIC) program. The County's environmental health sanitarians are part of the department.
- Montana ExpoPark– Manages the fairgrounds and organizes and operates the annual Montana State Fair and all events and facility rentals on the property throughout the year.
- Cascade County Community Health Care Center (Clinic)–Operates a full service health clinic open to all County residents.
- Aging Services– Operates a wide range of aging programs throughout the County including senior transportation, meals on wheels, congregate meals and many other services. The department also provides support for five senior centers throughout the County.
- Water and Solid Waste Enterprises– The County provides eight solid waste sites throughout the County and three coin-operated water dispensing facilities.
- Libraries, Parks and Museums– The County contributes tax funding to the City/County library as well as funding to the Belt Library and Wedsworth Library in Cascade. The County also provides tax funding to the Paris Gibson Square and the History Museum.
- County Extension– Provides a full range of agricultural services in the Community, partially funded and managed by Montana State University. Operates the Cascade County 4-H program.
- Special Assessment Districts– The County manages several property-owner approved special assessment districts throughout the county including road improvements and maintenance, street lighting and water/sewer improvements.

The following chart breaks down all County expenses by Service for FY 2018:

FY 2018 Expenditures By Service



The largest expense is General Government at \$15,996,472 or 22.7% of all County expenditures and includes the appropriations for the services previously described, plus liability insurance costs. Public Safety is next with \$15,534,066 or 22.0% of all County expenditures. This includes the operation of the Adult Detention Center which houses state and federal inmates for which the County receives reimbursement. Public Works is \$8.11 million plus \$6.84 million of Capital Projects or 21.2% of total expenditures. The Health Department and Health Clinic combine to total \$7.07 million in annual expenditures or 10% of the total budget. The Montana Expo Park contains \$4.58 million of annual expenditures or 6.5% of the total budget. Internal service funds including employee health insurance and fleet accounts for \$4.1 million or 5.9% of the total budget. District Court and JDC account for \$2.9 million or 4.2% of the total budget, and Aging Services accounts for \$2.1 million or 3.1% of the total budget. Water and Solid Waste operations total nearly \$1.2 million or 1.7% of the budget, with the remaining programs making up the balance. Transfers between fund are contained in several of these service areas and total \$9,189,236 of the total \$70,598,229 in appropriations.

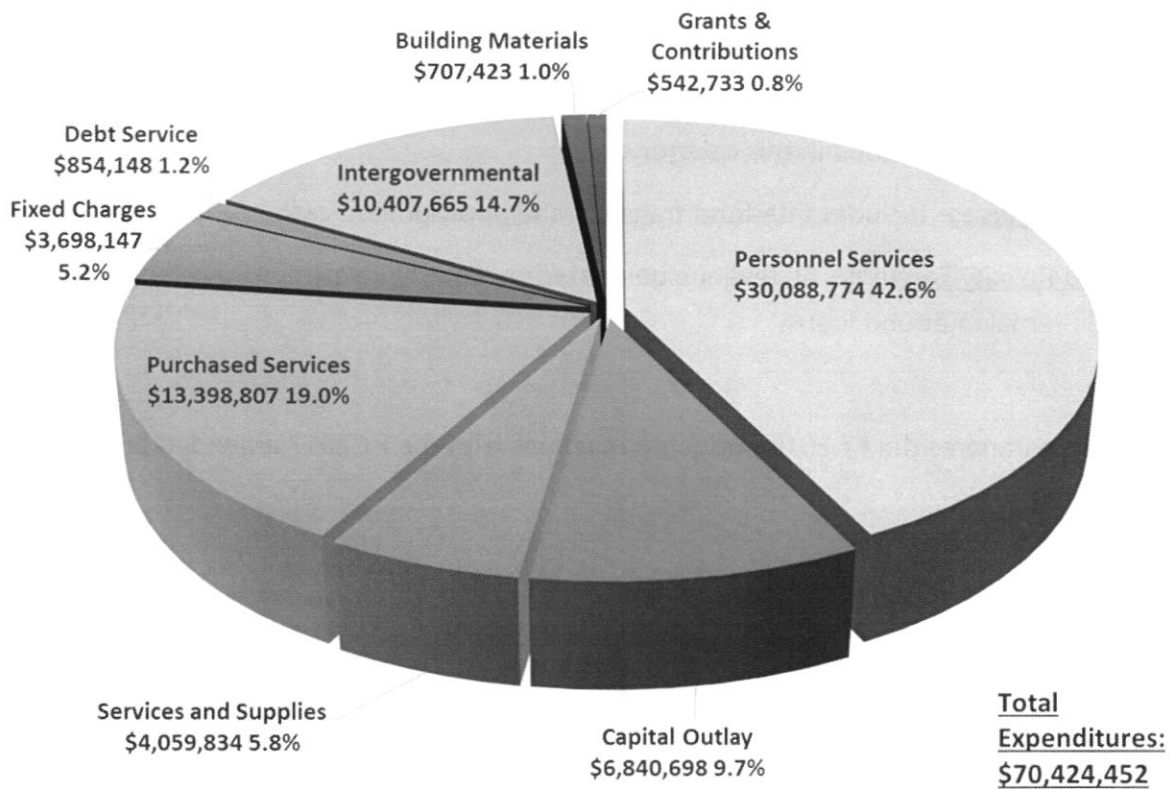
Cascade County Expenditures by Category:

Cascade County's Services are further broken down by category. For budgeting purposes, a summary of those services are used to measure and compare the County's operations. The following is a brief description of each category, as described in the State of Montana's Budgetary Accounting and Reporting System (BARS) Manual:

- Personnel Services– Expenditures for services rendered by officers and employees of the governmental unit, including related benefits and employer's contributions.
- Supplies– Expenditures for articles and commodities which are purchased for consumption or resale and are materially altered when used.
- Purchased Services– Expenditures for services other than Personnel Services which are required by the governmental unit in the administration of its assigned functions or which are legally or orally obligatory on the government unit.
- Building Materials– Expenditures for all materials related to building or road construction.
- Fixed Charges– Expenditures for charges that are mainly fixed from period to period and cannot be classified under another category, such as insurance, fees, rent, etc.
- Debt Service– Expenditures for the repayment of debt or for related charges.
- Grants, Contributions, Indemnities & Other– Expenditures for payments made to institutions or civic organizations.
- Other– Expenditures for charges for services not classified under the previous categories.
- Capital Outlay– Expenditures for the acquisition of right to, or addition to, fixed assets, including cost incidental hereto such as legal, appraisal and brokerage fees, land preparation and demolishing buildings, fixtures, and delivery costs.

Each of the Service areas in the County are comprised of some combination of the above categories. Since the main function of County Government is to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of county residents, each county is unique how to provide those services to citizens in the most efficient and cost effective manner. Cascade County is continually researching the most effective way to provide essential services in an area comprising 2,659 square miles. In order to do so, it takes personnel, supplies, and physical assets to serve the public.

FY 2018 Appropriations By Category



Personnel services comprises \$27.3 million, or 39% of the total operating budget of the County. Purchased services is \$12.7 million, or 18% of the budget. Intergovernmental, fixed charges and debt service expenditures combined total nearly \$18 million, or around 25% of the total budget. Services and supplies comprise \$3.7 million. Smaller categories include building materials and outside entity grants and contributions.

Cascade County Revenues

Cascade County Revenues are grouped in the following categories:

- Property Taxes– Includes all real and personal property taxes that the County receives annually, including penalties and interest. Includes vehicle registration fees and state entitlement share money.
- Charges for Service– Includes all fees that the County collects including Health Clinic visits, state and federal inmate reimbursement at the Adult Detention Center, and charges collected to Expo Park events.
- Intergovernmental– Includes all government revenues outside Cascade County including state and federal grants and reimbursements (excluding the Adult Detention Center).
- Fines and Forfeitures– Includes all County and Sheriff department fines and property seizures such as drugs.

- Licenses and Permits– Includes all fees collected by the County for building permits, health/sanitation licenses, alcohol licenses and all other permitting.
- Internal Services– Includes revenues for internal service funds including Fleet, health and property and casualty insurance and county printer.
- Miscellaneous– Includes donations, contributions and other revenues. Recent bequests to Aging Services for Meals on Wheels are included in this category.
- Other Financing Sources– Includes interfund transfers and appropriated cash reserves from previous years.
- Investment and Royalty Earnings– All revenue generated by County investments, including interest payments on internal interfund loans.

The following chart compares the FY 2018 budgeted revenues with the FY 2017 amended budget:

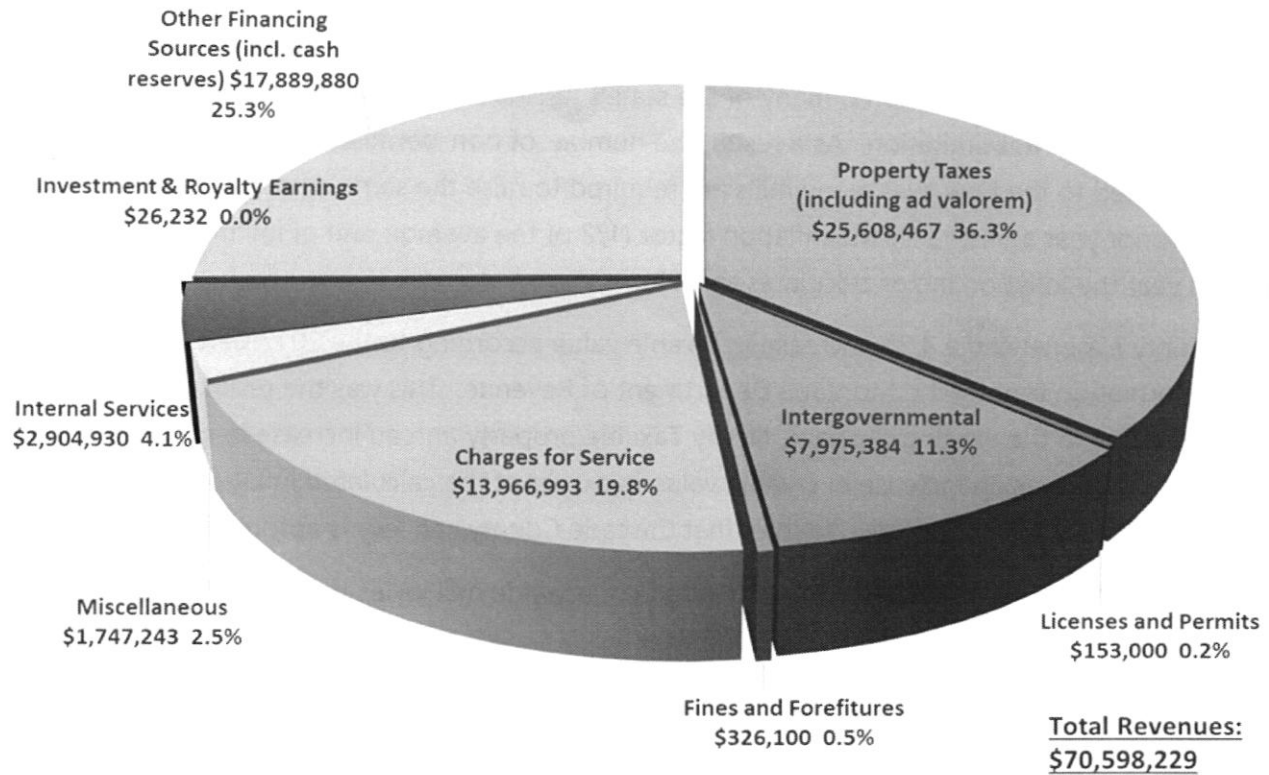
Cascade County Total Revenues

	FY 2017 Amended Budget	FY 2018 Proposed Budget	% change
Property Taxes	\$24,540,533	\$25,608,467	4.4%
Licenses and Permits	\$162,955	\$153,000	-6.1%
Intergovernmental	\$9,355,316	\$7,975,384	-14.8%
Fines and Forfeitures	\$374,600	\$326,100	-12.9%
Charges for Service	\$12,909,275	\$13,966,993	8.2%
Miscellaneous	\$1,761,028	\$1,747,243	-0.8%
Internal Services	\$4,791,450	\$2,904,930	-39.4%
Investment & Royalty Earnings	\$151,893	\$26,232	-82.7%
Other Financing Sources (incl. cash resrvs)	\$18,410,405	\$17,889,880	-2.8%
Total Revenues	\$72,457,455	\$70,598,229	-2.6%

Property taxes account for \$25.6 million or 36.3% of all County revenues. Other financing sources including transfers in, new debt, and cash reserves account for \$17.9 million or 25.3% of the total budget. Charges for service accounts for \$13.9 million or 19.8% of total revenues. Intergovernmental support counts for \$7.9 million or 11.3% of total revenues. Internal service revenue accounts for \$2.9 million or 4.1% of total revenues. The remaining revenues consist of Miscellaneous, Fines & Forfeitures, Licenses & Permits, and Investment & Royalty revenues make up the remaining 3.2% of the budget.

The following chart breaks down the County revenues by Category:

FY 2018 Total Revenues by Category



Cascade County Employees

The following chart reflects employee counts by category for FY 2018 and includes part-time permanent positions:

Cascade County Total Employees

Department	Total Employees
Aging Services	31
Clerk & Recorder	18.5
Commissioners' Office	5.5
County Attorney	28
County Extension	2
Courts	26
Disaster & Emergency Services	2
Expo Park	12
Health Clinic	51
Health Department	36
Human Resources	5
Information Technology	9
Juvenile Detention	29
Library	2
Public Works	76
Sheriff/ADC	144
Treasurer/Supt of Schools	18
Total	495

*Includes permanent part-time positions

FY 2017/18 Mill Levies

In 1986 the citizens of Montana passed the "Montana Limitation of Property Taxes Initiative, CI 105" which limited the increase of property taxes to 1/2 of the average rate of inflation for the prior three years. Although the legislature has exempted many of the state's jurisdictions from the requirements of I-105, counties remain under this limitation. As a result, the number of non-permissive mills that the county can levy each year is limited to the how ever many mills are required to raise the same amount of money as was assessed the prior year adjusted by the inflation factor (1/2 of the average rate of inflation for the prior three years). This year the inflation factor calculates to .59%.

Cascade County experienced a 4.2% increase in taxable value according to the 2017 Certified Taxable Valuation Information sent by the Montana Department of Revenue. This was the result of a combination of increased valuation in the existing tax base, Newly Taxable property and an increase in the valuation of the TIF Districts. Since there was an increase in taxable value in excess of the calculated inflation factor for this year, the maximum number of non-permissive mills that Cascade County can levy is automatically reduced.

The following chart is the Commission recommended countywide mill levies for FY 2017/18 compared to the previous year:

Cascade County Countywide Mill Levies

Mill Category	FY 2017 Total Mills	FY 2017 Reve- nue	FY 2018 Proposed Mills	FY 2018 Proposed Revenue	Difference FY 2018 over 2017
General	50.36	\$7,780,469	49.72	\$8,051,259	\$270,790
Bridge/Countywide Road	10.45	\$1,614,494	10.45	\$1,692,189	\$77,695
Weed	1.60	\$247,195	1.60	\$259,091	\$11,896
State Fair	6.41	\$990,326	7.00	\$1,133,524	\$143,198
District Court	4.39	\$678,242	4.00	\$647,728	-\$30,514
Comprehensive Insurance	1.68	\$259,555	0.50	\$80,966	-\$178,589
Mosquito	0.50	\$77,249	2.00	\$323,864	\$246,615
Emergency Medical Services	0.25	\$38,624	0.50	\$80,966	\$42,342
Mental Health	0.53	\$81,883	0.50	\$80,966	-\$917
Senior Citizens	1.50	\$231,746	1.50	\$242,898	\$11,152
County Extension	1.06	\$163,767	1.30	\$210,512	\$46,745
Public Safety	36.24	\$5,598,767	33.41	\$5,410,148	-\$188,619
Senior Transportation	1.07	\$165,312	1.00	\$161,932	-\$3,380
Museums	1.22	\$188,486	2.00	\$323,864	\$135,378
MAX MILLS per I105	117.26	\$18,116,115	115.48	\$18,699,907	\$583,792
PERMISSIVE NON-VOTED MILLS					
Permissive Health Insurance	9.51	\$1,469,266	10.45	\$1,692,189	\$222,923
Sheriff Retirement Syst 3%	0.00	\$0	1.05	\$170,029	\$170,029
Total Countywide Mill Levies	126.77	\$19,585,381	126.98	\$20,562,125	\$976,744

The value of one mill is equal to a formula based on the total taxable value of all properties in the County excluding Newly Taxable properties, as well as properties contained in Tax Increment Finance districts. It is the role of the Cascade County commission to set the mill levies for the County to fund essential County operations in compliance with state statutes. In FY 2016/17, the Cascade County Commission decided to levy the maximum amount of mills permitted by state law, and will do the same for 2017/18 fiscal year, in order to accommodate the capital projects.

Overall for this tax year, the total number of countywide mills levied by Cascade County went up slightly due to increases in the permissive health insurance levy and the new permissive levy for the Sheriff's retirement system created by the last legislature. These increases were partially offset by the reduction in the non-permissive levies caused by I-105.

The following chart reflects the "rural" mill levies, which are only levied on properties outside the city limits of Great Falls. In addition, the Road and Road Materials levies are not levied on properties within the city limits of Belt, Great Falls, Neihart and Cascade:

Cascade County Rural Mill Levies

Mill Category	FY 2017 Total Mills	FY 2017 Tax Revenue	FY 2018 Proposed Mills	FY 2018 Proposed Tax Revenue	Difference FY 2018 over 2017
Road	28.18	\$1,773,606	27.66	\$1,828,807	\$87,918
Library	3.80	\$245,072	3.73	\$252,771	\$7,699
Road Materials	3.36	\$216,742	3.30	\$223,640	\$6,898
Planning	3.85	\$248,296	3.78	\$256,159	\$7,863
Health	6.74	\$434,679	6.62	\$448,618	\$13,939
Total Rural Mill Levies	45.93	\$2,918,395	45.09	\$3,009,995	\$91,600
		MAX MILLS	45.09		

The Commission decided to levy the maximum amount of mills for the rural levies in order to maintain the same level of services. This results in a decrease of .84 mills since the increasing value of each mill required a reduction in the number of mills levied.

Last year, county residents were assessed 172.7 mills for county services. This year, the total mills for county services are 172.07. A change in the total mills does not necessarily correlate with a change in your tax bill.

For example, a homeowner within the City of Great Falls who pays the County-wide mill levy whose market value is \$185,700 would see an annual county tax increase of 52¢. Similarly, a homeowner in unincorporated Cascade County who pays both County-wide and Rural mills, whose valuation remained at \$161,300 would see a property tax decrease of \$1.37. Taxing jurisdictions are layered, so an individual's tax situation depends on where their property is located within the County.

FY 2017/18 Capital Improvement Plan

The Cascade County Commission set a target for Capital Projects. Not all Capital Projects recommended by Cascade County staff made it to the final budget due to funding constraints. The Commission determined that the first priority for Capital projects was to finish funding the courthouse roof replacement and repair, which began in 2016. The County will receive \$108,396 in grant funding from the state and federal CTEP program for engineering and construction. The Commission will fund the balance with cash reserved for the roof replacement. This year's appropriation is \$1.575 million

The Fox Farm RSID was also budgeted over 2 fiscal years, with the portion anticipated for 2018 being funded with cash reserves totaling over \$1.2 million for engineering and construction.

The following tables reflect Commission-approved Capital Projects, Heavy Equipment and Fleet Replacement and Other Capital Outlay for FY 2017/18:

Major Capital Projects FY 2017/18	
Project	Total
Courthouse Roof	\$1,575,130
Fox Farm RSID	\$1,206,530
Remainder of Fox Farm area (Fawn, Dune, Dick, Hawk, etc)	\$941,510
Banik Office Space Purchase	\$350,000
Sheriff Office replacement phone system	\$68,500
ADC Parking lot & walking path improvements	\$80,000
ADC Phase 3 tile removal project	\$113,600
ADC new carpet/contingency	\$70,000
ADC LED Lighting upgrades	\$85,000
ADC expand cat walk	\$15,000
ADC frequency drivers for air handlers	\$10,000
ADC lawn tractor w/plow	\$7,000
HVAC at Health Dept. building	\$20,000
LED Lighting upgrades - CCHD, Pub Works, JDC, Aging	\$54,500
Health Dept/Clinic various equipment	\$46,550
JDC Emergency generator	\$120,000
Expo-Livestock Panels & Hog pens	\$20,000
Expo-Basketball floor & replacement of BB hoops	\$123,400
Expo-Emergency lighting upgrade	\$50,000
Expo-LED Lighting upgrade	\$70,000
Expo-Warmers for concession stands	\$17,020
Expo-Sewer line rebuild Family Living Center	\$10,000
Total Capital Projects	\$5,053,740

Heavy Equipment Purchases FY 2017/18

Item	Total
Gravel Crusher	\$601,700
Three (3) Motor Graders	\$270,000
Semi Truck	\$80,000
Two (2) Belly Dump Trailers	\$90,000
Stump grinder attachment for skid steer	\$5,500
UTV	\$13,000
Asphalt milling attachment for skid steer	\$38,000
Total Heavy Equipment	\$1,098,200

Fleet Purchases FY 2017/18

Item	Total
Five (5) Sheriff Vehicle Replacements	\$260,000
Replace wrecked Weed vehicle	\$35,000
Four (4) 3/4-ton super cab w/8' bed - Weed (2) & PW (2)	\$128,000
Four (4) vehicles for various uses	\$108,000
Total Fleet	\$531,000

Other Capital Purchases FY 2017/18

Item	Total
Replace (3) copy machines - various departments	\$29,486
A/V Presentation system	\$52,500
IT equipment/software upgrades - various department	\$26,000
HR & C/A office remodels	\$10,000
Repeater for Emergency Services	\$20,000
Print Shop equipment and other misc.	\$19,772
Total Other	\$157,758

TOTAL ALL CAPITAL OUTLAY **\$6,840,698**

Summary of Capital Outlay by Service FY 2017/18

Department	Total
General Government	\$1,925,130
Public Works	\$3,534,740
Sheriff Office/Adult Detention Center	\$709,100
Expo Park	\$290,420
Juvenile Detention Center	\$131,000
All Others	\$250,308

TOTAL ALL CAPITAL OUTLAY **\$6,840,698**



CASCADE COUNTY

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September 5, 2017

TO: Citizens of Cascade County

RE: Commission Remarks on the FY 2018 Budget

Like your home budget, a county budget is the result of balancing short term needs, long term needs and wants against available resources. As has been the pattern over recent years, aging infrastructure has taken a prominent position in our budgeting process. Foremost among these during the last budget and this budget has been the Cascade County Courthouse.

Our courthouse, which was completed in 1903, is in our opinion, one of the most beautiful of Montana's public buildings but after its 114+ years, the roof was failing. Rather than applying a set of short-term patches to the leaking areas, the commission decided after consultation with experts on historic roofs that it was time to totally restore the roof.

This has been an interesting project to observe as the new copper goes up and we look forward to its completion this fiscal year. It is expected that this project will provide our courthouse with a roof as solid as the original and that it will 60 or more years before the phrase "the courthouse roof is leaking" will be heard again in the commission chambers.

The growing safety concerns along Fox Farm Road and the State Department of Transportation's plans to improve and widen the northern portion of the road prompted the commission to evaluate the possibility of a Rural Special Improvement District to upgrade the county owned section of the road. Following a series of letters to residents and public meetings, the commission moved ahead with the creation of the district for the widening, reconfiguration and reconstruction of Fox Farm Road. This project spanned two budget years having begun at the end of FY 2017 and is currently in the final stage of inspection.

These two major projects coupled with additional road work as well as other capital outlays for building and equipment have been a major focus of the budgets in FY 2017 and this budget for FY2018. Together these assorted projects represent an investment of \$5,271,412 in the current budget.

Increasingly, county governments are being called on to supplement or replace services that have in past been provided utilizing federal or state dollars. This year will be no different as the state of Montana reduces its funding of services due to its fiscal situation. We believe that this budget is a good balance between the competing needs for funding and that through the day-to-day efforts of our fine employees that this budget will allow us to continue to meet the county's obligations to its citizens.

Sincerely,


JAMES L. LARSON
Chairman
Board of Cascade County Commissioners


JANE WEBER
Commissioner


JOE BRIGGS
Commissioner